



Brighton Institute of Modern Music

ON THE CD  
TRACK 26-34

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# VAN HALEN

EDDIE VAN HALEN'S GROUNDBREAKING STYLE SHAPED MODERN ROCK GUITAR, SO WE'VE PUT TOGETHER SOME SIZZLIN' LICKS TO SHOWCASE HIS INCREDIBLE TALENT

**W**hat is there to say about Edward Van Halen that hasn't already been said? Only Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton stand in front of him as rock's most influential guitarists.

This incredible guitarist burst onto the scene in 1978 with his band's self-titled debut album, along with an arsenal of truly breathtaking techniques including pinched harmonics, rapid legato lines, countless whammy bar effects and, of course, the two-handed tapping that's become something of a trademark/albatross around his neck.

It's Eddie's rhythm style that's often the most neglected side of his playing, so we've tried to balance up the flashier stuff with his fantastic riffing. It's virtually impossible to cram almost a 30-year career's worth of playing into nine licks, but we've attempted to give you some tasty morsels inspired by a cross-section of his work over the years.

With that in mind, there's a lot of technique to digest, especially if you're unfamiliar with the more gymnastic manoeuvres of modern shredders. Eddie's tapping style probably springs from most people's minds when they think of

the man, and it's one of those techniques that most guitarists have had a go at, at one time or another, and with varying degrees of success. To get it right, it's purely about coordinating your left and right hands. In isolation you'll find that neither hand is moving particularly fast or doing anything really tricky.

As always, it's crucial to slow these ideas right down, ensuring that your picking hand's first (i) or second (m) finger makes a good connection with the string, and that there's no noise created by the open strings. Even seasoned tappers would be wise to slow things down just to make sure the tone sounds good – it never hurts to take a refresher course in certain guitar styles.

This should also apply to everything else of Eddie's, because even the most innocuous of his rhythm parts can have some major technique to contend with.

Van Halen will forever be associated with his stripey red and white hot-rodded Kramer, fitted with a single Gibson ES-335 pickup. In recent years, however, he's favoured MusicMan and then Peavey signature guitars. All of these have the double-locking vibrato system (rather than a floating type used by Steve Vai etc), which allows him to divebomb but not move the bar up.

To sum up Eddie's approach, we hand over to the man himself: "I don't need a tone control on my guitar – the volume control is my tone!" **STEVE ALLSWORTH**

GEORGE COHEN/WIREIMAGE

## VAN HALEN: Example 1 – finger picking control

TRACK 26

♩=115

D G/D D C<sup>5</sup> D<sup>5</sup> Dm<sup>7</sup> Dsus<sup>4</sup> D

w/thumb and fingers

E B G D A D

TAB

10-10 9-7 8 7 7 5-4 0/3 5 5 7 5 5 6 5 5 8 7 7 0 0

p m m m m m i etc. p

ON THE CD - STEVE ALLSWORTH

By using two fingers and his thumb, Eddie exerts more control over doublestops and chords without notes 'ringing'. He's also very fond of juxtaposing major/minor chords, as with Dm7, Dsus4, D, which is very prog rock!

## TRACK 27

Eddie maintains a more uplifting sound by using D major embellishments. Notice the clever use of 5th and 7th fret harmonics creates a Dsus4 sound. The touch harmonic is probably one of the most difficult techniques to master in the final bar. Practise getting the 'virtual' 5th and 7th fret harmonics without bending the string at first. Touch the harmonic node (in this case at the 14th or 12th fret) very quickly, without leaving the picking hand's finger in place. A little vibrato will help the note sing.

## TRACK 28

Eddie's 'swing' rhythm style greatly influenced the likes of Steve Vai with tracks such as *Hot For Teacher*. Here, country style open-string pull-offs are used in a rockier context with the 'va va voom' provided by the swing rhythm. Try and dig in to the fourth string to bring out the pinched harmonics.

VAN HALEN: Example 4 – trademark tapping

TRACK 29

**D<sup>5</sup>**  
8va

† Tapped note TAB shows actual fret to tap (not resultant pitch)

Apart from the 14th fret E, the shape is a familiar Dm pentatonic one. Each shape is repeated on the next string which makes life easier when travelling at speed. Eddie favours using the first finger only to slide, rather than using the whole hand, so that the thumb can remain anchored to the edge of the fretboard.

VAN HALEN: Example 5 – linear patterns

TRACK 30

**C<sup>5</sup>**

Eddie uses linear patterns across the fretboard rather than specific scalar tapping shapes. This gives an otherworldly sound because notes dip in and out of key. The 'widdly' triplet tap leads into the more difficult Dm arpeggio in the last two bars, with a downwards and upwards legato idea combined with the open fifth string, for a wider intervallic sound.





VAN HALEN: Example 8 – whammy bar sounds

TRACK 33

♩=100  
A<sup>5</sup>

Scoop †

w/bar ††

Scoop

Scoop

Scoop

Scoop

NH

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

Scoop

Scoop

Scoop

TAB

E B G D A D

2.1 7 (5-7) {7} (5-7) 19 19 17 19 19 17 19 19 17 19 19 17 19

† Dive w/bar + wide arm waggle †† Dip bar violently and repeatedly while trilling + grad. move up the neck

EVH's solos weren't all melodic. There were often wonderful noises in his playing, inspired by the likes of Hendrix battering his axe. The 'pitchwheel' technique displayed in the final bar takes a little while to master, because it involves dipping the vibrato bar to roughly the same pitch as the pulled-off note. This technique should create a slightly 'drunken' pitch bending sound.

VAN HALEN: Example 9 – violining technique

TRACK 34

♩=100  
Dm

w/delay  
◁Vol. ▷Vol. ▷Vol. ▷Vol. etc.

TAB

E B G D A D

5 7 7 7 5 7 7 5 8 7 5 7 8 5 7 10 9 7 5 9 7 5 7

7 5 7 5 8 7 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5

Eddie's use of volume swells takes a lot of coordination to get right. To begin, it's best to staccato pick each note to make sure you're getting the timing right between delay repeats. Then practise the violining technique on its own. Wrap your fourth finger around the volume pot in the '0' position and roll it upwards as you hammer with your fret hand, losing the sound of the initial hammer-on and only hearing the swell of the note as you bring up the volume.



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